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PM Shehbaz invited to join Gaza 'Board of Peace'

• FO confirms receipt of formal proposal; India, Egypt, Turkiye among states tapped for membership • Charter envisions entity as UN rival, *FT* report says • Trump may hold 'indefinite chairmanship' • Reports claim $1bn fee for 'permanent seats'; White House says amount shows 'commitment' • US forms tiered governance for board despite Israeli objections

Dawn Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has been invited to join the Gaza "Board of Peace" after US President Donald Trump's administration reached out to figures worldwide to sit on the board and related bodies overseeing governance and reconstruction in post-war Gaza.

"The prime minister of Pakistan has received the invitation from the president of the United States to join the Board of Peace on Gaza," said FO spokesperson Tahir Andrabi in response to media queries.

"Pakistan will remain engaged with international efforts for peace and security in Gaza, leading to a lasting solution to the Palestine issue in accordance with United Nations resolutions," he added.

The invitation to Pakistan follows similar overtures made to leaders across Europe, the Middle East and the Americas.

Leaders who stated they have been invited to join the entity include Albanian Prime Minister Edi Rama, Argentine President Javier Milei, Brazilian President Luiz In cio Lula da Silva and Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney.

Indian PM Narendra Modi has also received an invite, the US envoy to New Delhi confirmed to the media on Sunday night.

Ulema council hails Gaza peace board invitation: Page 5

Regional stakeholders and European leaders were also prominent on the list, including Cypriot President Nikos Christodoulides, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orb n, Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, Jordanian King Abdullah II, Romanian President Nicusor Dan and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

'UN's rival'

The Trump administration plans to expand its "Board of Peace" into a permanent global entity to rival the UN, with potential membership requiring a $1 billion contribution, *Financial Times* reported.

According to a charter sent to prospective members, the board is designed to be a "more nimble

Continued on Page 11

THE collapsed portion of Gul Plaza shopping mall on Karachi's M.A. Jinnah Road continues to smoulder. The fire, which broke out on Saturday night, had yet to be fully extinguished at the time of going to press. At least half a dozen people, including a firefighter, have lost their lives, while several are still missing.—Shakil Adil / White Star

Govt cites weather among reasons for power outages

• Leghari says electricity cuts due to fuel mismanagement, transmission constraints, among other causes • Minister contests 'outdated' Nepra report, says document should have been shared for 'fact-checking' • Claims tariff dropped from Rs53.04 in March 2024 to Rs42.27 in December 2025

By Khaleeq Kiani

ISLAMABAD: The government on Sunday conceded power cuts in most parts of the country for the last 8–10 days despite surplus capacity due to transmission constraints and fuel mismanagement, the continuation of the debt servicing surcharge on consumers for the next six years, and the cost of inefficiencies being charged to taxpayers.

Speaking at a press conference in the capital, Power Minister Awais Leghari said the grid faced problems due to fog, north-south transmission constraints, a few days of extension in the scheduled outage of a major nuclear power plant, and 'mistakes' in the right fuel arrangements by the Sahiwal Coal Power Project. He said the issue was, however, mainly due to the repeated tripping of the transmission system because of the weather.

This resulted in lower production of a few hundred megawatts, on top of lower hydropower generation due to annual canal closure. The minister apologised to the consumers for the inconvenience but said that nothing was possible due to the weather.

The minister contested the recent State of the Industry Report (SOIR) 2025, released by the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (Nepra), saying it

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Search begins after fire kills six, reduces shops to ashes in Karachi

By Imtiaz Ali

KARACHI: The death toll from the blaze at Gul Plaza on Karachi's M.A. Jinnah Road rose to six on Sunday, with three more people, including a firefighter, losing their lives, while 26 others were injured and 59 were still missing, officials said.

Authorities said the fire, which erupted on Saturday night, was almost contained after 24-hour-long efforts. A search operation was underway amid fears of further casualties at the time of going to press.

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Officials initially suspected an electrical short-circuit, but said the cause was yet to be confirmed.

The fire spread rapidly, fuelled by combustible material stored in around 1,200 shops in the ground-plus-three-storey building, spread over 8,000 square yards.

On Sunday, hundreds of people had gathered around the building, including distraught store owners whose businesses had turned to ash.

Parts of the building collapsed during the firefighting operation. Traders' bodies estimated financial losses of up to Rs25 billion and claiming that 5,000 people worked in the shops.

Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah ordered

Continued on Page 5

TTAP seeks treason cases against 'mandate thieves'

By Sumair Abdullah

KARACHI: A multi-party conference, organised by the opposition alliance Tehreek Tahafuz Ayeen-i-Pakistan (TTAP) on Sunday, adopted a 14-point resolution presenting demands such as an 'independent probe' into the alleged rigging in 2024 elections and 'punishment for those responsible for it' under Article 6 that deals with high treason.

They also announced that a black day and a nationwide strike would be observed on Feb 8 to commemorate the second anniversary of the 'rigged' general elections, urging people to hold peaceful protest rallies and calling on transporters and traders to close their businesses.

As part of their charter, they also demanded the holding of 'free and fair polls' as well as the release of incarcerated PTI founder Imran Khan and other political leaders who were in jail over what they termed "bogus cases".

The MPC, titled 'Pakistan's Political

Continued on Page 5

ON OTHER PAGES

Truce after Syrian forces capture Tabqa

The Syrian president and the Syrian Democratic Forces announce an immediate ceasefire after fierce fighting saw the government forces taking control of SDF-held territories. The Syrian army captured Tabqa before reaching a ceasefire with the Kurdish forces on Sunday on all fronts. **Page 12**

Plus...

BUSINESS & FINANCE

Kinnow trapped by border closure, Iran sanctions

SITUATIONER

The fruit, which could reach Russia within six to nine days through Afghanistan, now has to be routed through Iran. This journey takes 25 days, too long for perishable fruit. But Trump's threat of 25pc tariff on countries trading with Iran has made even this backup route geopolitically risky

By Amjad Mahmood in Sargodha

THE gate of a kinnow polishing and grading factory on the outskirts of Bhalwal, Sargodha district opens gingerly, and a middle-aged orchard owner steps in. His voice trembles as he makes an unusual request: "buy my kinnow at whatever rate you can". The wedding date of his daughter is fixed, he says, and the fruit on his trees is the only asset he has left to turn into cash.

Factory managers hear such pleas daily this season. What was once routine commercial transaction has turned into human drama, reflecting a crisis engulfing Pakistan's citrus economy — one shaped by closed borders, rising costs, policy neglect, and the shadow of international sanctions linked to Iran.

Pakistan's kinnow exporters face a perfect storm as the traditional overland route to Russia and adjoining markets through Afghanistan remains effectively closed. For years, this corridor allowed kinnow to reach Russia, Ukraine and Central Asian Republics within six to nine days, keeping the fruit fresh and competitive.

With that route blocked due to tensions with Kabul on security affairs, exporters are diverting shipments through Iran — a route that takes around 25 days, significantly increasing transit time, costs and spoilage risk. What was once a backup option has become the primary route, and even that has become geopolitically risky.

Adding to exporters' anxiety are renewed threats by US President Donald Trump to impose a 25 per cent tariff on countries trading with Iran, raising fears that reliance on Iranian transit and markets could invite penalties or complicate access to Western destinations.

Govt claims vs reality

Last week, the federal government announced that Punjab's farmers would be allowed to export kinnow and potatoes through "alternative routes". Growers and exporters say the announcement offers little practical relief.

"Iran was never a newly opened route," says Hanif Hanjra, a small orchard owner. "It has always been there, mainly used after Iran finishes its own mandarin crop. Calling it an alternative to Afghanistan is misleading."

According to growers, Iran cannot replace the

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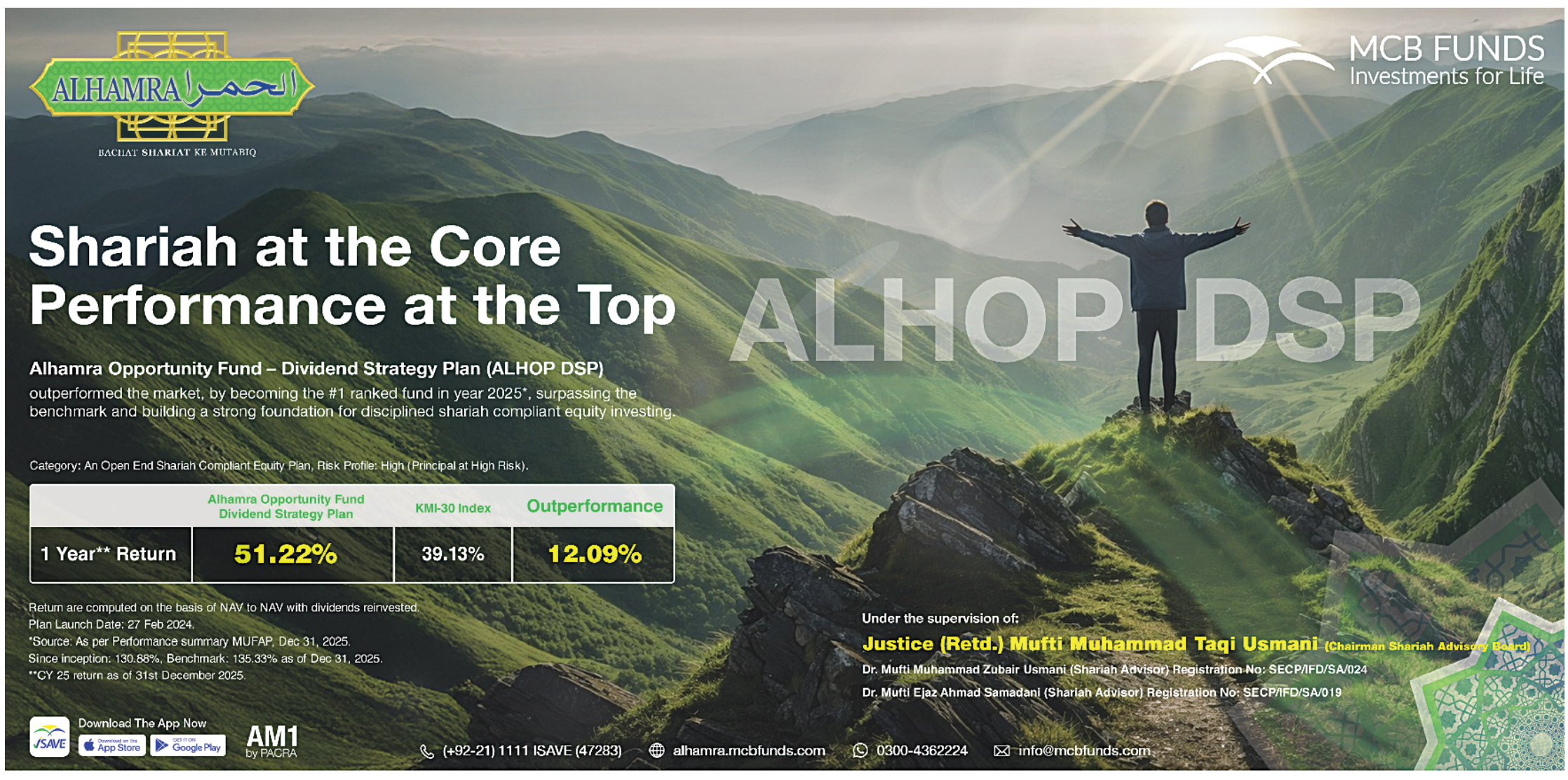
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